



THE
CONNOISSEUR.

By Mr. T O W N,
CRITIC and CENSOR-GENERAL.

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— O te, Bollane, cerebri

Felicem ! aiebam tacitus, dum quidlibet ille

Garriret, vicos, urbem laudaret.—

HOR.

To Mr. T O W N.

S I R,



HAVE been very much diverted with your observations on our honest tradesmen, who make weekly excursions into the neighbouring villages; and I agree with you, that the generality of our citizens seldom dare trust themselves out of the fight of *London* smoke, or extend their travels further than with their wives and children in the *Wandsworth* double post-chaise, or the *Hampton* long coach. But we may now and then pick up a stray citizen, whom business has dragged beyond the bills of

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mortality

mortality, as it happened to myself the other day about twenty miles from *London*: and as I was mightily pleased with his behaviour and conversation, I have taken the liberty to send you an account of it.

BEING caught in a shower upon the road, I was glad to take shelter at the first inn I came to; which, if it had been called the NEW INN, I should have thought, from its antique appearance, that it had been an house of entertainment in the time of our great grandfathers. I had scarce alighted, when a strange figure (driven thither, as I supposed, on the same account with myself,) came soberly jogging into the yard, dripping wet. As he waited for the steps, before he would venture to get off his horse, I had the opportunity of surveying his whole appearance. He was wrapped up in an old thread-bare weather-beaten furtout, which I believe had once been scarlet; the cape was pulled over his head, and buttoned up close round his face; and his hat was flapped down on each side, and fastened about his ears with a list garter tyed under his chin. He wore upon his legs something that resembled splatterdashes, which (as I afterwards learned) were cut out of an old pair of boots; but his right shoe was considerably larger than the other, and had several slits in the upper leather. He had spurs on, indeed, but without rowels; and by way of whip a worm-eaten cane, with a bone head studded with brass pins, hung from his wrist by a string of greasy black leather.

I soon found I was nobody: for the GENTLEMAN, it seems, took up the whole attention of the maid, mistress, and ostler, who all of them got round him, and with much difficulty, by the assistance of the steps, helped him down.

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My landlady, (after the usual welcome) before it was possible for her to see any part of him but his nose, told him "he looked brave and jolly;" and when she had led him into the kitchen, she fetched a large glass of what she called "her own water," which (she said) would keep the cold out of his stomach. All hands were now busied in drawing off his furtout, which discovered underneath a full-trimmed white coat, and a black velvet waistcoat with a broad gold lace very much tarnished. The furtout was hung to dry by the fire as well as his coat, the place of which was supplied by a long riding-hood of my landlady; and as the gentleman complained of having suffered by a loss of leather, the maid was dispatched to the doctor's for some *diachylon*. The usual question now succeeded, concerning dinner; and as he observed I was all alone, he very courteously offered me to join company, which I as readily accepted.

THE important business of dinner being settled, we adjourned into a private room; when my fellow-guest told me of his own accord, that he lived in *London*; that for these twenty years he had always come to the town we were now in, once a year, to receive money, and take orders for goods; and that he had always put up at this house. He then run on in the praises of the landlady; and tipping me a wink, "ay, says he, she has been a clever woman in her "time, before she bore children." He added, that for his part he did not like your great inns; for that they never looked upon any thing under a coach and six. He further informed me, that he was married to his present wife in the first mayoralty of Alderman *Parsons*, and in the very waistcoat he had on: "but, says he, I now wear it only

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"on a journey; because, you know, a bit of lace commands respect upon the road." Upon enquiring about his family, I found he had three boys; one of whom was bound apprentice to himself; the other was sent to sea, because he was a wild one; and the third he designed to make a parson of, because he was grave, and his play-fellows at *Poule's* school used to call him "bishop."

ALL this while he had sat in my landlady's riding-hood, with a linen nightcap on his head tied on the top with a piece of black ribband, which (he told me) he always rode in, because it was cooler than a wig. But the saddle-bags were now ordered in; and out of one of them he drew a large flowing grizzle carefully buckled, which he combed out himself, borrowing some flour from the kitchen drudger. His splatterdashes were next taken off, his shoes wiped with a wisp of hay; and being assured by the landlady herself, that his coat was dry enough to put on, he completely equipped himself, in order to wait on several tradesmen, with whom he had dealings, after dinner. As this was not quite ready, we took a walk to the stables to see his mare; and though the beast seemed as lean and harmless as *Sancho's* afs, he assured me he had much ado to ride her, she was so frisky; "for she had not run in the chaise these two "sundays past."

BEING summoned in to dinner, we sat down to a repast of mutton chops and sheeps hearts, which last he declared to be the wholesomest eating in the world. He objected to wine, because there was not a drop good for any thing to be got upon the road; but he vastly recommended my landlady's home-brewed, which he affirmed to be better than

than *Hogsdon* ale, or the thatch beer at *Islington*. Our meal being ended, my companion took his pipe; and we laid our heads together for the good of the nation, when we mauled the *French* terribly both by land and sea. At last, among other talk, he happened to ask me, if I lived in the City? As I was desirous of hearing his remarks, I answered, that I had never seen *London*. "Never seen it?" (says he) "Then you have never seen one of the finest sights in the whole world. *Paris* is but a dog-hole to it." There luckily hung a large Map of *London* over the chimney-piece, which he immediately made me get from my chair to look at. "There, says he, there's *London* for you.—You see it is bigger than the Map of all *England*. He then led me about, with the end of his pipe, through all the principal streets from *Hyde-Park* to *White-Chapel*.—"That, says he, is the River *Thames*;—There's *London Bridge*—There my Lord Mayor lives—That's *Poule's*—There the Monument stands: And now, if you was but on the top of it, you might see all the houses and churches in *London*." I expressed my astonishment at every particular: but I could hardly refrain laughing, when pointing out to me *Lincoln's Inn Fields*—"There, said he, there all the noblemen live." At last, after having transported me all over the town, he set me down in *Cheapside*, "which (he said) was the biggest street in the City."—"And now, says he, I'll show you where I live.—"That's *Bow-Church*—and thereabouts—where my pipe is—there—just there my shop stands." He concluded with a kind invitation to me to come and see him; and pulling out a book of patterns from his coat-pocket, assured me, that if I wanted any thing in his way, he could afford to let me have a bargain.

I PROMISED to call upon him; and the weather now clearing up, after settling the ballance of our reckoning with the landlady, we took leave of each other: but just as I had mounted my horse, and was going to set forward, my new acquaintance came up to me, and shaking me by the hand,—“ Harkye, says he, if you will be in town “ by the twenty fifth of this instant *July*, I will intro- “ duce you to the *Cockney's Feast*; where, I assure you, “ you'll be mighty merry, and hear a great many good “ songs.”